

Eckhart Tolle Retreat May the Mind Be Servant of Awareness 11hour44min part2

[Speaker 1] (0:16 - 2:43:34)

not to get entangled in further concepts. There's always the temptation of making a spiritual teaching into a new conceptual structure. Demanding also of a spiritual teaching to answer all questions, to provide a framework through which you can look at the world, which is not the state of looking and listening, the state of openness.

Demanding the security that is provided by a conceptual framework. And that demand is embedded in the human mind, which works in that way. And that way, you can notice it perhaps in yourself by feeling the pull or the push within your mind.

And there may even be some emotions that go with that, because it's all aspects of the mind made self. Noticing the pull or the push in your mind that manifests as a need or more on the conceptual level, a way for the mind to function. And that can be very strong.

And made them into conceptual structures. And the essence of all true spiritual teachings, of course, is to take you out of that trap, to realize who you are beyond the stream of words, thoughts, concepts in the mind. And then the mind comes in and makes a conceptual structure out of the original simple signpost that points the way out of that.

And then come in more and more demands. You demand that how interpreting through that conceptual framework. Philosophy develops.

There's nothing wrong with philosophy. It's a beautiful play. It doesn't take you to freedom.

So wherever humans meet and wherever spiritual teaching happens, arises, the teacher and the taught are one. Wherever spiritual teaching arises, there also arises confusion because the mind will come in and will somehow try to make the mind into concepts in its search for greater security. I need to know this.

And so, of course, there are 100, 200 vital questions that the mind could ask. Some of them, I have them on paper. Others are in the head, some of the heads.

Vital questions, they look, they are important, yes, on their own level. This needs to be addressed, yes. But it is the need for the mind to build something up.

If it is vital, you will know the answer from within. Observe in oneself, observing in oneself, this need to have the universe, reality, arranged so that you can know where things are, how they fit in. That's the need of the mind-made self.

When you step beyond that, you step into the unknown, also the unknowable, into the state of not knowing, which is deeper even than not knowing. There is a knowing in it, not through concepts. This is why we are here.

So the reason for being here in that sense is limited to that, limited to the bare essential. The rest, as Einstein put it, is details. Any further questions?

Of course, the details are very interesting, but no further answers or further questions would enable you to go more deeply now into what's already here. They would only take you more into a conceptualization. If the answer is vital, the question is vital, the answer will be there from within you.

But we are learning to go through life in that state of pure, aware, looking and listening in which the need for immediate interpretation, an immediate need to immediately fit it into, how does it fit into my belief system that is relinquished? It's only there, when that is relinquished, that true intelligence can emerge, and that is an intelligence that's not even recognized by the human mind as intelligence. It goes beyond it.

The mind still functions within that vastness, and yet it's far beyond what the mind could comprehend. We could also say that nothing that has been said here is the truth, because the truth cannot be said. And with most statements, if you look deeply, the opposite is also true, except perhaps, this is true for all thought, except perhaps for thought that denies itself.

This is traditionally the way of Buddhism, teaching through what the truth is not, showing you who you are not, what the truth is not. No positive assertions are made. And one could say this is an extremely wise way of teaching that leaves you with nothing on a conceptual level, potentially, however, the mind is so clever that it has used even Buddhism.

It's taken a few hundred years, and made it also into a big conceptual structure. The original teaching of the Buddha took everything away. It gave you nothing.

That's why the Western scholars who only approached it through the discriminating mind called Buddhism nihilistic, life denying, because it didn't give them concepts to believe in. It took away concepts, left you with the empty space. Can you say something about God, they asked the Buddha.

And the answer was, did you hear the question, they said. So perhaps the only way for thought to be not subject to the polarities or to the opposites, which are also true, is for thought to deny itself, which means that this last statement that I just made is the closest to the truth you can ever get, that it is true for thought, and thought denies itself, then there's some truth there. On a conceptual level, you may disagree or agree with certain words.

It's not that important. But beware of the mind's fascination when it has found something to disagree with. The mind is when they have a beautiful carpet, a huge carpet, huge pattern, beautiful.

And there's a little thing there that shouldn't be there. And you cannot help but continuously look at that. And that in your mind then begins to assume it becomes a thought form that obliterates the carpet, the rest of the carpet, nothing personal in that.

That's what the human mind does. So it sometimes happens during a talk, a statement is made that somebody disagrees with or positively knows that that's not quite true. That's not easy to find, not difficult to find such a thing, a statement that you don't disagree with or you find fault with.

And then you don't hear the rest of the talk anymore because the thought form that objects, takes possession of your mind becomes. And then you might be seething, waiting two hours for the end of the talk, and finally, something that was said to the first five minutes, easy to miss the rest. That's how the mind works.

It's, if this were an academic setting, that would perhaps be very important because that, it works exclusively on that level. But this only, the mind ultimately is only here as a means, the words are here as signposts, not much more than that. And as such, they're not that great either.

It is a wonderful thing. We're not speaking here of content because there's the fascination with the content of your mind. We are speaking here of observing, there's the possibility of observing the structure that is at work underneath whatever the content of your thoughts is.

There's the structure of the mind. It's a wonderful thing to observe in oneself the workings of the mind. When you look underneath the content of mind and then you discover things that I just mentioned, how one thing, it can become fascinated with one thing that assumes importance and obliterates everything else.

You can observe its reactive nature when there is something that you object to that clashes with what you know to be true and you may be right, but observing what that does to you, the fact that you are right is not enough to observe what that rightness, how that operates in your mind, how it obliterates everything else, can easily do that, wants to do that because that's a way of the mind of remaining in control. It's beautiful and wonderful to notice that in oneself. It doesn't mean that there's something wrong with you.

When you notice it, there's something right. So this is part of this teaching, of course, is to see the mind and its workings, to look at it, to notice it, and say, ah, yes, there it is. That's what it does.

That's fine. So this gathering has never been about content. It's not about that, of adding, about adding some content or some information to your mind.

I have no information. And if some information has cropped in here and there, maybe it was even wrong. I really, there is no information.

What is there to say on the level of information here? And so it's not about any kind of content of mind, although it looks like it on the surface. Some outside observer peering through the window might think that all week you've been learning new things because this is an institute.

But that's not really the case. You haven't really been learning anything. I sometimes, I might use that word.

I say we are learning to look and listen, but that's really letting go of that which prevents you from looking and listening. It's an unlearning, perhaps. It's certainly not an adding to here.

That would be dreadful if you went away with your feeling that now you knew more. Watch your mind, as they sometimes say in Buddhism. Be there as the witness.

Don't get too fascinated by the content of the mind, but watch the structure of the mind, what it does, how it does it. The mind wants you, which is thought, wants you to become fascinated by the content of thought. They have a beautiful way in some Buddhist monasteries that I visited, when a monk gets angry with another monk, or nun, for things.

Somebody's talking too much, and in the monastery, when conventionally, you would say, why don't you shut up? But in the monastery, you can't say that because you are practicing loving kindness. So all you can say then, instead of shut up, is watch your mind.

And then the other person goes, that could be an awakening. It could also lead to immediate reaction. And then the words before he knows it, the words come out, why don't you watch yours?

Yes. You can observe how fast and how efficiently the mind may itself goes into, when its sense of self has even been slightly diminished by some comment, something somebody said, or did, or insinuated, or might have insinuated, or said openly, or criticized, or judged you, or situation somehow diminished you, how quickly and efficiently the human mind may itself goes into the repair mode, when its structure, the structure of the self has seemingly been diminished by some comment or judgment, criticism, how immediate the reaction is, and that is the defense mechanism that immediately comes into play, that is designed to repair the injured, sense of self, which is all the structure of thought, the conceptual entity, of course, it's very vulnerable.

So any kind of criticism and so on, leads to, when you're not alert, there is an immediate reaction, which is designed to repair the structure of self, and if possible, as part of that repair job, to diminish the self in the one who just attacked yours. Often, that's what the entire repair consists of, in you diminished me, now I'm going to diminish you, in your sense of self, and that could go on for a long time. Some relationships work on that level of, in companies, corporations, institutions, and so a wonderful thing of those things that you observe within yourself is defensiveness, defensiveness, which is an essential aspect of the mind made self, how it jumps in immediately, cannot tolerate any kind of diminishment, because it's, although nothing really has been taken from who you truly are, but in your conceptual self structure, you have suffered a loss when somebody calls you an idiot, to give a simple, often it's more complex than that, or not as direct, perhaps, but to take a simple example, when somebody either calls you an idiot, or which is the same thing, calls you wrong, you're wrong, that's an, it's an enormous insult to the mind made self to be wrong, and unless there's this, you are there beyond mind, there's an immediate and automatic defense mechanism that comes into play that will defend your position. Whether or not you're wrong doesn't matter anymore, because you're defending your sense of self, and often it's done by saying, no, you are wrong.

You're trying to pull something from him or her, he or she tries to pull something from you, demolish the self. Observing defensiveness in oneself, how automatic it is, and then when you see it, you may no longer be totally dominated by it, and then you can be open to being wrong, and say, me wrong? And you look and see it might be true.

You may be right, or yes, you are right, I got that wrong. I often get things wrong. The more you speak, the more likely that is.

No ultimate truth, even in spiritual discourse, as we know, is possible, so even a simple thing, like saying, I don't know, is very hard for some mind made selves. They must know the answer, because even to the mind made self, even to say, I don't know, is a little diminishment. When my younger brother was 17 years old, and his ego was growing, as it does at that age, I noticed he could never say, I don't know.

Whatever question you asked him about anything, he had to know the answer. Sometimes a complete fabrication that he invented on the spot. And then I suggested that he should try out what it feels like to say, I don't know.

And I said, next time, I'll remind you. And when something came up, and I could see he didn't know, and he was about to explain something that he didn't know about, I said, remember, try it, just try. Say it.

And finally, very reluctantly, he said, okay, I don't know. And I looked at him, and I said, and you haven't died? No, I'm still here.

And as presence arises, emerges from within you, you may even find now, as that

awareness is there, that the automatic, unconscious defense mechanism, the self-repair mechanism, may at times no longer operate. And somebody criticizes or says you're wrong, or either designed to diminish your sense of self or could be interpreted as diminishing myself, and there's no automatic reaction anymore. There's simply what one could call allowing the seeming diminishment of oneself, not resisting it.

Of course, you're not being diminished at all. You're diminished in your illusion of self. This is why even that in itself is a spiritual practice.

Not defending yourself, the conceptual self-structure, and allowing what appeared to be a diminishment of yourself, but of course was only a diminishment of the structure of the mind-made self, and that is allowed to be without resistance. This is only possible in the simultaneous arising of presence of space consciousness, because already you sense the deeper levels of your being as space. From there, you can allow the diminishment of the conceptual self to happen, and it's actually a beautiful thing not to resist that.

That somehow was also part of Jesus' teaching, being of course misinterpreted and misunderstood, and that's a wonderful thing when that begins to operate in your life. Then you can actually welcome what is, after all, only a diminishment of the illusion of self, because life, in many different ways, going beyond purely personal situations, life does that to you anyway in many ways. You're going towards that anyway, no matter how you try to build up the self.

In the end, life, one way or another, will demolish it. And that simply happens because you gradually go towards the dissolution of the form and the greatest achievement then also comes to an end. So life, and you go through life and things will happen.

Life will do that to you. Even an illness is such a thing, really. I'm not in control anymore.

The mind will try to somehow fit that in also, and sometimes it manages to fit the illness and enhance my sense of self even through the illness. So clever, the mind-made self, you can do even that. But potentially, the illness can be something that seems to diminish you.

You're not that powerful anymore when you lie in bed. And I've observed in some humans who have a strong egoic self that when they are ill, even a slight illness, a flu, they become more pleasant. They have some insights that they don't have in their normal state.

The ego gets a little weaker. They just, energy isn't there. And they say things they wouldn't have said, and then the health comes back and they're in control again.

The diminishment of self has also in different spiritual traditions been a spiritual path to be practiced as an active thing rather than a passive thing, but that becomes dangerous. If you are actively attempting to diminish yourself, that's dangerous. I don't know how

often that has worked in the history of spiritual evolution.

In a few cases, it may have worked, but I don't recommend that because there is behind that somebody who wants to achieve something through my diminishment, and there's a hidden, very easily, a hidden ego that wants to enhance itself through becoming humble, through becoming the lowest of all. Surely I am the lower than you. Surely nobody's as humble as me is implied.

In some cases, in very exceptional cases, perhaps it may have worked. St. Francis perhaps practiced that, but before that, probably some big diminishment happened to him anyway. He was in a war in a very, he suffered greatly and something happened to him there.

He always said, I'm the most miserable of all creatures. Why does God speak through you? They asked him, why does God manifest these wonderful things through you?

They asked St. Francis, because he said, because I'm the most miserable and the lowest of all, and God likes that. He talks in very simple, talked in very simple language. It's, in him, it seemed to have been without ego.

It was genuine. And so there's the, what these, the great teachers leave behind, but it's also your, really the opening is also happening with you. Those are only precursors.

They leave behind, even after their death, an opening, a space. I saw that very clearly this year. We were in India visiting the burial place or the Samadhi, whatever they called it, of Ramana Maharshi.

They were, I don't know if it's, it's just where people walk around every day. They walk around it, hopefully not to gain merit, but to be surrendered in every step. And it's, I was sitting there watching, and it seemed that they were walking around a hole, an emptiness, an open space, being drawn to it.

Three weeks later, we were in Italy, visiting the tomb of St. Francis in Assisi. And the same scene, there was that tomb, and people, continuous stream of people coming in and walking around it. And again, I sensed they're walking around, not a person, not the memory of a person or the remnants of a person, but an emptiness.

They're walking around that, drawn to it, because within them, that same space, which is one, is also emerging and recognizes itself there. So that, of course, to be the space, rather than the object in space, is not what we have learned here. We have unlearned, and we are still unlearning to be the object, to see ourselves as the object in consciousness, the mind object, the mental me.

And we are seeing who we are beyond that as the object, as the space, not the object in space. That's the greatest realization. And that knowing and that seeing can be there

every moment, in every sense perception, that happens within the field of spacious stillness.

In every human interaction, that spacious stillness can be there in the background as the essence of your being, as intelligence, so that the foreground of your life, which includes thoughts, which includes whatever arises in your field of perception, includes situations, events, people, the foreground in your life is no longer absolutely important and deadly serious. There is no longer, it loses its heaviness. It is balanced by the other dimension of life, the unmanifested.

And so you go through life having one foot in the unmanifested and one foot in the manifested, a bridge between form and formless. That's your function. And you thought you were a person and you turn out to be a bridge.

And please don't make that into some new concept. The mind then will say, I don't agree with you, this concept of bridge. It's not quite right because you're right also.

Or we are all wrong, comes to the same thing. Space consciousness, to use that term again, just a little pointer. It also, it spreads.

This is a beauty. Each one of you is also a seed for that, the seeds of space consciousness going out, seeds that have already sprouted, even better. Seeds that have already sprouted and you go out into this world somehow, if not yet fully, but somehow embodying that dimension.

Somehow within yourself, you have gone beyond and you are beyond the personal dimension, the exclusively personal sense of self. Even though the personal may at times still manifest, reassert itself from time to time, and yet that deeper dimension of consciousness has already emerged. That cannot be reversed.

It can be obscured temporarily, but that process cannot be reversed. It's happened. It has emerged and it will continue to emerge.

And if it becomes obscured for long, it will push through one way or another. It's even pushing through in humans who are not drawn to any spiritual teaching. It may require some external event to crack the shell of ego.

And it's pushing through. Gently, just like a plant. A plant doesn't, a plant, they say, some plants can go through cement, through concrete.

A plant has enormous power, but it is so gentle. It's just very, very gentle. There's no, it's just enormous power, but extreme gentleness also.

So what comes, forms of leading, and one of the forms is our retreat. There's the external form of our retreat, which is coming to an end, dying, because every, the end of

every form is a little death. Even saying goodbye to somebody is a little death.

Each time, little death. That's why in many languages you need to affirm that you're going to see them again. Au revoir, auf Wiedersehen, see you again.

See you, see you. So this is a little death too, as the form comes to an end. Now, that's the form, of course, it's fleeting.

It wasn't that long ago that it started, and we said, this is the now. And then we said that at some later point, we will check in just to see if it's still the now. And now the form has come to an end, and we can check in again.

Still the same space, it's still now. And the essence of our retreat is the timeless dimension, of course, of consciousness, is inseparable from who you are. That cannot end, the timeless cannot end, the essence you carry within.

So, nothing of true value is ever lost when a form dies. And in a little while, this chair may be empty. That's beautiful, because you can then see more clearly where these words came from.

It's a beautiful thing for those years as humans who follow a teacher. It's always a beautiful event, challenging when the teacher dies, which could mean either the body dissolves or the teacher goes away, which some Eastern teachers used to do. They would always run away.

Some still do it. And then you have to say, where has he gone? Oh, he's supposed to be, so, oh, let's go and find him.

Until finally the body dissolves, and then you're, where is he now? Where is she now? Left us.

And finally you're thrown back upon yourself, what all the years he or she has been pointing to, the truth is not here, it's there in you, it's in you, this is just an opening. Yeah, but you. There's such peace coming from you, such beauty coming from you.

How do you know that? Where do you feel that? How do you know it?

Well, here. So where is it? So walk through this world as much as possible.

Without the heavy conceptual self-structure, and that starts the moment you walk out of here. Don't immediately reassume the burden of your life situation in your mind. It may want to reassert itself.

You walk out of here, okay, the retreat is gone, where am I going now? Back to my problems, back to my home situation, back to that, and then while you're traveling home, you're already there dwelling on that. What I have to do, left undone, whenever

left.

All the things, okay, and then the facial expression will undergo a change. You're back in reality. And by the time you open your front door, you're already stressed.

Could happen. Or you could just travel home beautifully as a field of awareness at this moment, whether you're driving or sitting on a plane or bus or hitchhiking. Whatever it is, this moment is your life.

And there's the external of it, and that's beautiful too today. Every day if you go deeper, deep enough, so you don't miss the beauty that's external, and you don't miss the beauty, the essence of beauty within, without which you would never recognize any external beauty, the essence of beauty, which is the essence of consciousness, through which beauty is recognized as a reflection. Where is the beauty?

Again, the question, where is that beauty that you see there? Where do you know it? Where is it known?

Where is it recognized? Here. Here.

So there's the essence. A love, a loving interaction, perhaps even someone you met here, some of the people you met here beyond mind, as you look into their eyes, you sense there's that beingness, and there's love. Where is the love?

Where do you recognize the essence of that other person? In here. It is all within the unconditioned consciousness contains that.

It is the essence, not the form. Whatever you see in form is the skimmed milk, and you are the cream. Of course, they are related somehow.

Due to the limitations of form, this form cannot meet and hug each form that's in this room, but that is not really necessary. The hug has already happened throughout the week, and the love, which is only the recognition of yourself, the recognition of not two, one, always just that. We'll have a moment of stillness.

I suggest you stay for just a little while with the empty chair here. Thank you, thank you. Oh yes, we were going to check if it's still now.

I think it is. That's a strange thing to, of course, the way we did it just now, it's a little bit funny, but just to, one could almost say you could, this is not quite right, of course, it's because it's language, but I'll say it. One could almost say you could sense the now, be aware of it, not as something, not as a thing, but as a presence, an aliveness, not something.

And so we've already fallen into an era of creating a subject and an object when we say you can become aware of the now. And that's what happens when one speaks, because

that implies now there's two things here. There's you and that which you become aware of.

But the truth is, what we call the now is awareness itself that knows itself, but doesn't divide itself into two. And of course, it cannot be separate from who you are. You are that awareness.

That's the secret that frees you once you know it. Now, knowing it, this is not a knowing that is conceptual, because then you would have a belief, I am awareness could become a concept. But to know directly, here, now.

So our practice is meeting the now fully. We spoke of the possibility of allowing what is to be. And that means not imposing interpretations on it.

So let's use the, where we are, the setting here, the beauty that surrounds us. Let's make it into part of our awareness practice during these days. And see if we can meet nature without imposing labels or mental labels or interpretations on it.

That means we're working, that's a working, not a good word, but one of these days that word is going to disappear from the language, but not yet. Working with our sense perceptions. This is a very important, a very helpful way of stepping out of the stream of thinking.

A little, I've recently started to call it exits. The present of your mind, the present self, the conditioned mind that most people identify with as themselves, as me, that present self has hidden little exits, easy to overlook. It's not really locked, they're open.

And one such exit is quite simply sense perception. That to perceive something fully, visual, auditory, takes you out of conditioned thinking. And I'm, anybody who perceives beauty or beauty is, no matter how briefly, able to step out of mind and perceive without interpretations or labeling, if only for one second.

But more than that, if you're very alert, now most people don't know this, because all they know is their, whatever they perceive is immediately interpreted through the conditioned thought processes. It's compared to something else, you find some personal relationship to it, it reminds you of that, or you simply put a label on it and then you think you know what it is. And you inhabit a flat universe that lacks depth because the lent labels obscure to you the depth that there is, and the aliveness and the sacredness that there is in every living thing.

And living thing includes what the mind calls dead things. Living things includes everything because everything is alive. Even the stone, if you looked into the stone, you could see that there's an intense aliveness there.

Physicists have done it in their way. They know that the stone is an alive energy field.

And matter itself is alive.

It looks to us as impenetrable, solid, and dead, but it's not. So no matter whether we would conventionally call it living thing, realize whatever you perceive is alive. But let's speak specifically here about nature, plant life, and animal life.

Of course, mineral is also very beautiful. So usually, you perceive through the screen of conceptualization. And that is a deep-seated habit that we inherit, a collective mental habit.

And perhaps until recently, there was not much chance of getting out of it. But now, the possibility is there of stepping out of that deep-seated collective conditioning and see that it is possible to meet perceptions in the field of simple awareness. In many of you, if you are alert, you can observe an interesting phenomenon.

When you first perceive something, it could be a visual perception. It could be an auditory perception. Suddenly, you hear a bird singing.

Or visually, you turn this way, and suddenly, you see a tree in the most amazing colors. And if you're alert, you can catch that first moment of perception, auditory, visual. Something new arises in the field of perception.

And there's a little space always when something new enters your field of perception in which the labeling has not started yet. That is the moment, really the moment of true perception. And that moment is a moment of inner stillness where thought processes don't operate.

There's a gap. And then, thought processes usually come in. And that gap is missed by most people.

And to the mind, it is not significant because to the mind, all that is significant is thoughts. If you can't think any thoughts about something, it is insignificant to the thinking mind. And so there probably, not probably, I'm certain that there are many people in this room, not only who, in the first moment of perception, almost everybody does that, the first moment of perception, there is the freedom from labeling, but it's not recognized.

But there are many of you here who already find in their everyday life there are moments of more prolonged non-labeling of perceptions. And that is quite amazing. That is incredible shift in consciousness from the labeling mind to the free, unconditioned spaciousness in which that arises.

And I suggest here as a practice to be alert, especially to that first moment. And if you recognize that there's a moment when you first perceive something, a leaf, a stone, a tree, or the totality of field, a grove of trees, and if you bring awareness to that, then

that awareness itself will be there for longer. If you are aware of that space of awareness that is there the moment you first perceive something, and then the sense perception happens within a field of stillness.

That is, you bring the stillness into the sense, it's perceived against the background of stillness. And then perhaps at some point the labeling mind may come in, if only to say, oh, you see, there's the stillness. It's possible.

So that is a practice, especially these days that you're here. Interact with nature in that way. Then, of course, everything becomes, really comes to life, becomes alive.

However, there's something in you that doesn't want to do that, because there's the fear that you might be losing something important. And that fear is the fear of the mind, which says, I won't know anymore. The mind says, I won't even know what this is.

The strange thing is, all the mind knows is one particular kind of knowing that is through conceptualization, through labeling. There is a deeper knowing in which you know without the limitations of concepts. But that knowing is, to the mind, looks like not knowing anything anymore.

And really, that is the state in which a greater intelligence operates, perceives through you. But to the mind, it's like you've lost something. It's because you haven't lost anything.

The labels, you know them when you need them. They are still there. You can get them out of the filing cabinet, or whatever analogy we can use in computer language.

I don't know that. Retrieve it from the data banks. Oh, that's what it is.

You retrieve it. When it's needed, the label is there. A lot of the time, it's not only not needed.

It limits you tremendously to be trapped in a world of labels. A conceptualized universe, when you only know concepts, labels, thoughts, you inhabit a conceptualized universe. Everything is immediately made into concepts.

Some people are so good at it. Unfortunately, in our culture, the better you are at it, the more intelligent they think you are, if you can manipulate concepts. And so that's, you can get your PhDs in that way.

I can, there's nothing wrong with PhDs if you're not trapped there. And that conceptualized existence, it's not only something you do to nature. You do it to people and to yourself.

You conceptualize your own life into a series of thought forms and call it me. And then you do it to others. Conceptualize who people are.

And some people are very good at that, too. The moment they meet somebody, they just look at you just to find out what makes you tick. And then after two or three minutes, they have it.

They've got it. Now, sometimes that thing of just working out what this person is all about, some people are actually very good at it. But all they can ever find out is the conditioned mind of that person.

And on that level, they may even be right. On the level of the egoic conditioned mind, what they say might be, I'm sometimes surprised when people come to me and say, what did you think of this person? And I say, I don't know.

And then they say, well, let me tell you about him. This is how he is, that's what he really wants. He's doing this in order to manipulate you and to do this and that and that.

Oh, maybe they're right. But another thing that they do is then they get, they don't see that as being the level of conditioning. And from then on, whenever they relate to that person, they relate through the screen of their interpretation, which of course, no matter who you are dealing with, it is extremely narrow and limited.

It is not the reality of that human being. It may be an aspect of the conditioning that is operating there, pretending to be somebody, but it's not, it cannot touch the reality of that human being. Every human being carries all possibilities within, including Buddhahood, Christhood, every saint.

And it has happened that the greatest criminal turned into a saint. When the conditioned entity broke down, through intense suffering, it can happen. Fortunately, not to you because you're here.

If you were not here, it would happen through intense suffering. That is the grace that is there through suffering. It erodes eventually, suffering is created, you could say, by this mind-made entity to a large extent.

People create their own suffering. Humanity creates its own suffering. And yet, there is built into the egoic madness, the element of grace, and that is the very suffering that is created by that limited experience.

And that exclusively personalized sense of self destroys in the end that sense of self, that limited sense. It erodes it. And so sometimes you find in people who have suffered a lot physically or in other ways, they become very simple, a childlike state, not childish, childlike.

That is the state of great openness, clarity. That is the state of being free of mind, where a deeper intelligence operates. And it happened to them through suffering.

And to some of you, suffering brought you here. And the rest happens here. So that gets eroded during this.

And every week, it gets eroded in a more pleasant way here. Although some of you may be in suffering as you sit here. Can't stand any more of this.

And you project yourself away from here, seeing yourself in the car driving home. And if you do jump in the car and drive home in the middle of the retreat, then just before you get home, you will think that you have failed miserably. You've left the retreat and now it's all gone.

It's always the other. The other, where you are not, is always where you should be, of course. So what we called this morning, and it seemed a very, first, a very passive thing when this morning we said, when you allow what is to be the isness of this moment, then something reveals itself to you that is beyond the form that this moment takes.

And the form may appear limiting. The formless life consciousness is known through not reacting to the forms that appear. Where do they appear?

In the field of now. If you react to the forms in the field of now, your own form, psychological form of me, gets strengthened. That's why the me likes reacting, because it strengthens that I.

And you can observe it in other people or in yourself. When you react against something, perhaps wanting to be right or, you can see how, on one level, satisfying it is. And why is it satisfying?

In reality, of course, it's painful. It is a form of pain. The body knows that, because the energy, it cannot flow anymore.

The energy field of the body stagnates. The body knows it's painful, but the egoic entity thinks it's great, because you've enhanced your sense of self. The enemy is there, and it feels great.

And some people even say it feels great after shouting at somebody and say, oh, that feels better. And so, observe that you allow it, and that takes you beyond form. Your sense of self is no longer in form.

It is deeper than any form. So, the easiest practice, and that's why we start here, is as you meet nature, nature exists beyond mind. Nature is pre-mind, one could say.

It exists in a much greater state of oneness with a source than humans. Humans have gone out of that much further. Nature is more deeply connected to the source, animals, plants.

So, to enter the state of what is ultimately a state of no thought, I wasn't going to say it

so soon in the retreat, not to frighten anybody, the state of no thought, it is helpful to meet any natural phenomenon, a plant, an animal, that lives in that state of no thought. They also are expressions of consciousness, but they don't inhabit a conceptualized universe. The dog does not have a self-concept, or a problematic sense of self.

A cat doesn't, or anything that lives, the bird, the bird simply hasn't separated itself and says, that's me. It doesn't derive its sense of identity from conceptualization in the mind. It hasn't created that split.

It just is an expression of the one in form, limited through its form, yes, but a beautiful expression of that. And so, it is often, a great meditation, if you can watch a tree, a flower, or a dog, or a wild, or a bird. It does not stimulate thought, because it operates beyond thought.

Conscious, yes, but not through conceptualization. Now, we are not returning to that state. This is not where we are going, because that would be a falling back.

It would free you from a lot of suffering, yes. And some people seek to return. They can't stand their mind anymore.

They cannot stand the painful sense of self, that burden that I have to live with, me. Living with me every day is dreadful. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy to live.

I'm just giving an example of the. So many people perceive life as a burden, a great burden. And every morning you wake up and you find yourself.

Now, you may think what you find is the problems in your life, but it really is the heaviness of the sense of self that looks out there for some kind of liberation or freedom and is not getting it. All you ever encounter is some other limitation and little brief moments of apparent freedom, which turn out to be illusions. So, that is the self that has a heaviness to it.

And an animal doesn't carry that burden. It is limited through its form, yes. But it lives in alignment, in greater alignment than humans.

And so, its existence is not problematic. And it dies with great ease compared to humans. And in some cases, human beings are kept sane by their animal.

That's why some people, they have a dog or a cat, and it's the one thing that keeps them, it's their anchor to a dimension beyond conceptualization and mind. They have this anchor there. They've also, animals that humans keep fulfill an incredible function, an anchor of sanity.

And you can see with some animals how unhappy the master is, the owner of the animal, and how carefree the dog is. Even after having lived for five years with this person, the

dog is still joyful, greeting every moment with joy. And so, I saw a little sticker recently to put on the fridge, which said, God, please let me be who my dog thinks I am.

Now, of course, the truth is that the dog doesn't think. That's why he's in joy. And that's why the dog relates to you.

He doesn't relate to the conceptualized you. He relates to the you beyond, that's hiding behind the conceptualized me with its problems. Amazing.

In everyone, of course, that dimension is there, the unconditioned, pure consciousness. And it's wanting to emerge. That's one way of putting it.

It wants to emerge. It wants to flower through humans. And that's why we are here.

So, although you may have tried to escape from the prison of your conditioned mind by going into drugs or seeking some kind of escape, moving, wanting to get out of the mind, drinking sometimes helps a little bit, not for long, but you take, you're being, you're then taken into unconsciousness. You're moving out of your mind. Yes, it feels liberating, yes, but you're moving towards sleep.

And sometimes it's nice when you get very tired, you can't think about your problems anymore. And then there's a moment before you reach sleep when you feel quite good. And then you go to sleep.

But we are not leaving mind by going that way. We are stepping beyond mind. And with that comes an alertness.

Freedom from thinking, yes, but at the same time, there's wakefulness and alertness, not moving towards unconsciousness. But nature is very helpful because it teaches you to live in no mind. So in the way you meet, there's a deeper empathy with nature when you don't impose on it the screen of conceptualization.

There's a very deep meeting that takes place when you perceive nature in that way. And this is an ideal place surrounded by all this beauty of perceiving in that way. And it is a significant event, cosmic, going far beyond the personal when you perceive nature in the state of not labeling, in the state of still awareness.

Nature itself finds its fulfillment at that moment through you because you are not separate. And within the oneness, nature sees itself through you. It loves that, its own sacredness.

The tree, the flower become aware of themselves. This sounds a little mystical, but that's how it is. So the essence here, we begin with nature because nature is so helpful.

Just be aware for a little while of when you first see something. Bring some alertness into your, when you walk around here, sit. Be there as a field of alert presence and see that it

is quite possible to step out of the habitual labeling mind for how long doesn't matter really.

More important, often you step out of the labeling mind. Then the rest looks after itself. Once that movement has started, and this is miraculous, the current of awareness that has begun to come through what before was a heavy layer of conditioned mind stuff, once this current of awareness has begun to move through you, it has an intelligence of its own.

It is pure intelligence. And that then operates, it's become free, and you don't have to be concerned very much. It flowers by itself.

So sense perception is extremely important here. It is one way in which you can leave the prison of the conditioned mind. And then you may notice when you perceive in such a way, there's the form that you perceive, whatever it may be, and one could say there's a stillness in which the perception happens.

That's the field of awareness. At first, this is not something you can know as an object because it's the very essence of all knowing. You cannot know that as an object of knowledge.

You can only be it, you are it. And even here, sitting here, you can sit here and think about your story or the next moment or the last moment where you're going to be. Or you can be here as a field of aware presence.

And the goodness that we spoke of that you find when you allow this moment to be as it is, because this is allowing this moment to be as it is, not imposing an interpretation. And if an interpretation comes, recognize it as a mind, an interpretation. Not totally believe in it, not totally be absorbed by it, just see it.

Yeah, there's the conditioned mind which comes up with its, whatever it says. And then you go back to the perception itself. So the goodness that is hiding underneath, no matter what form this moment takes, that is an aspect of that unconscious, sometimes very obscurely sense that there is something in them that is greater.

There is a goodness that they cannot quite access. It doesn't seem to operate when they operate in their everyday life. It may break through occasionally, accidentally almost, sometimes in moments of great danger.

When they're threatened by death, it could break through when the conditioned mind subsides because it can't cope anymore with the urgency of this moment. So almost everybody senses that in some obscure way, they know that there is something in them that is greater than what they manifest as their everyday existence. That may be pitiful.

What they manifest in their everyday life may not be great. There may be a lot of

wanting and needing and me against you on a small level, whether it's on a little level or whether it's you become the CEO. CEO is becoming a dirty word these days.

But there's no difference on C. It's just on a bigger scale, a bigger egoic scale. That's all.

That's why it's more noticeable. The greed of the ego, the greed, the need for more. There's a fly buzzing around my head looking for something.

So that then, what many people obscurely sense within emerges is an aspect of the unconditioned love of joy, aliveness, compassion. It dwells there in that dimension. So then that also begins to operate through you in your interactions with the world, the unconditioned.

So this is why it's what at first sight seems so insignificant when I say go to nature. Look at the tree and be completely there in the looking. Allow the perception to arise in a field of stillness.

At first seems, well, okay. Okay, I've done that now. What do I do now?

Next thing. To the mind it seems insignificant and yet nothing is of greater significance than that. And because it's through that the unconditioned emerges and then those qualities that are an inseparable part of that dimension flow out into this world.

You begin interacting with nature because nature helps you. The next level up then is interacting with human beings that you know superficially, people you've just met, people that you come into contact with casually and people perhaps on the retreat that you meet and we'll be addressing that in more detail also to bring that non-labeling awareness into your interactions with other human beings. Then an enormous change happens on the planet when more humans interact in the way in which you don't impose conceptualization on other humans.

So we'll be addressing that more. Nature is easier. Humans are more difficult.

So you begin with nature and nature will continue to be extremely helpful in this. And that in itself is of the benefit of, is incredible, the way in which that deepens your life, the way in which you interact with nature, the depths that is there when you allow the mystery that is every living being to be there. Yes, you still know the label if you should need it but the mystery that is there that is covered up by the label that says three, the depths that is there, it's just inconceivable.

And the aliveness that is there that some people have glimpsed when they took acid that perhaps was their first time they glimpsed something that's beyond conceptualized mind and the teapot suddenly became intensely alive. It wasn't a teapot anymore. But then you've come back again.

That is not the way. So this is much better than acid. But for some people it's been a little glimpse of stepping out of the prison of conceptualized thought into an intense aliveness.

So the mystery that is there, what, how absurd to think that you know when the moment you have put a label onto something. And children become conditioned at an early age in that way when they learn language. And the human mind wants that in the child because the human mind says, what's that?

And then the father or mother says, that's a tree. And then the child repeats, tree, tree. And the illusion that the child then now knows what it is has already started.

Next time, the next day, the child sees a tree. Before the child was looking, that was pre-mind. And that you find in very young children when you see them, mind hasn't started yet and yet consciousness is already there of their surroundings.

And they look, they are all little Buddhas. And then they look at you. And that also some humans are drawn to little children as they are drawn to animals because they feel they are not being judged.

They know that the dog or the little child, the pre-mind child is not imposing a label on them. They find freedom there. So they are drawn whenever they see a little child, they go there, oh.

Oh, yes, it's beautiful. And then a moment comes in the child's life when the conceptualizing mind wants to start. And the questions start, what is that?

It's demanding labels. So one day the child is looking at the tree in openness and wonder. That is still the state of oneness.

And the next day it has learned the word tree. And then it looks at the tree and there's still a moment, the gap is still there that I mentioned. And then it remembers the label tree.

Oh, tree, tree, tree, yeah, that's right, that's what it is. And now let's go on to the next thing. For many humans from that moment onwards, they don't really look at the tree anymore because they think they know what it is.

And this is just one tiny example of then thousands of concepts. And then being imprisoned in that. And then having concepts about me.

That's who you are. So going beyond all that is liberation. The ancient word that's been used for thousands of years, free, free from what?

Free from the conditioned mind. So nature, that in itself is an enormous shift when you can go into nature and interact in that way. And yes, you look upon everything.

That is love. Anything that is not labeled as you perceive it is looked upon with love. Not the love that the mind talks about that says, come here, I lead you.

I love you because I need you. I won't let you go. You're mine.

Or I love this flower so much that I'm going to take it home with me. It's not that kind of love. Very wisely in the Spanish language, the expression I love you is the same as the expression I want you because that is the usual way in which what is called love by the mind.

But the true love emerges whenever there's the absence of conceptualization, of labeling. And that is why the dog loves you continuously. And that is why the little child can look, no matter who the child looks upon, there is that openness.

It doesn't judge a person as ugly. The openness is there. The label isn't there yet.

So nature is an access point. It is an opening for that. But also including inanimate nature.

Let's call it inanimate nature. There's the beautiful realm of minerals. Wonderful.

The earth itself, the stones, the aliveness that is there. And even man-made, human-made things have an aliveness, especially if there's still some closeness to nature, like things made of wood, natural materials. But even synthetic things, yes, they too are alive, a little bit more removed from the human body.

From the source, perhaps. But yes, also a temporary expression of consciousness. So you can sit in your room, perhaps, let's say, the room where you're staying here, or the room, let's say, with here, and just briefly sit and be there, look around, and perceive your surroundings without needing to label.

Innocent perception, you could call it. Not wanting anything from something. Not comparing, just letting it be.

Don't go on for too long because from that state of having gone beyond mind, as this is something new for most humans, it is possible to go from that state of having gone beyond mind to a state of alertness, and suddenly you fall below mind into sleep. Until that becomes a more habitual state in you that can happen. So that's fine too.

Beautifully expressed, there was a film about golf playing, The Legend of Bagger Vance, where somebody's learning to play, or relearning to play golf, and his teacher is showing him how to be present, how to step out of mind. In one line, the teacher says, he's now learning how to stop thinking without falling asleep, because only then can he play well. And every sportsman who does well knows that, that that state is the state of freedom from thinking, of absolute alertness, clarity, relaxed alertness and clarity.

And so a few people, we mentioned artists earlier, some sportsmen have access to that in their field of activity. And here it is emerging as your normal state of consciousness. It's becoming your normal state of consciousness.

Thought is still there, yes. Will continue to be there for quite a while, quite a while. As long as you are here in the body, thought will also still be here.

And yet, there's a freedom. Thought moves, it is no longer problematic, it is no longer invested with self. You're not seeking yourself in thought forms anymore.

That's the liberation. And thought is recognized as thought. You don't, you're not totally trapped in every thought that comes.

So all that is the shift in consciousness that this gathering is part of. Transitional period is when thought loses its capacity to make you unhappy, but it still operates. But you don't believe totally in the judgments of your mind anymore about yourself, about your life, what it tells you about your life, how you have failed or been treated unfairly by life, whatever the story may be.

It's the old conditioned thought forms. And your sense of self does not reside there anymore. So use the access, the exit, the little exit door that is nature.

Bring that alertness to your perceptions. And if thoughts come occasionally, let them come and go without fighting it. There's no point in fighting thought.

That's more thought. Allow the thoughts to come. It might even be a nice thought.

You look at a flower in the spaciousness of presence and then the thought comes, isn't that beautiful? It's nice. And then the thought subsides and there's more spacious presence.

And then some other thought comes. It's fine. And as you sit here, listen to these words as if they were coming from within you, because they are.

They're not somebody else's words. The truth is coming through. Consciousness speaks, that's all.

It doesn't matter through which form it speaks. Consciousness speaks, is pointing the way back to itself. So here too, you just simply sit here being present.

Alert, awake. That is the essence of all meditation. But it's no longer a separate activity.

It's now. Every moment. Once I had a group, we were addressing just this and somebody put her hand up and said, when do we start meditating?

This is the meditation. And you are learning. Once the momentum of mind has taken you

over again, and that will happen.

It's been there for so long, it has a momentum still. The mind will come back. It could come back even as you're sitting here, in which case you will no longer be here.

You could be gone. And you notice it. You're not seeing anymore.

You're not perceiving anymore what's around you, only just enough not to bump into things. But when you can watch a person whose attention is totally drawn into thinking, there's very little outflow through eyes. There's an absence in the eyes.

I can demonstrate it, perhaps. Ah! Ah!

Ah! Ah! Nobody there.

Not here. Ah! So your consciousness is being absorbed by thought processes.

It all goes in here. And then, not long after that, but if that happens to you, and it probably will at some point, and then you can then, suddenly you become aware that once this has started, it won't be very long before some form of suffering will appear. And then those thought processes will go more dense.

And then the emotions you will feel that accompany those thoughts. And then you might go to your partner and you say, you know, I've been thinking. More often than not, whenever anybody comes to you and says, you know, I've been thinking, you know, here comes trouble.

And so that may happen to you. And then you will notice some form of suffering arising and some form of suffering arises. And that's a little signal that says, you must have lost the now.

Where's the now? Now? And that entity, one could call it, that is now there, it's a temporary little, because everything is life form.

Every thought is a life form. And a conglomeration of thoughts pretending to be a personal me is a temporary, one could say, life form, a temporary formation. And that temporary formation wants to continue in existence as that formation.

Like every life form wants to remain as that life form. It resists metamorphosis. And I'm sure if we could know the inner life of a caterpillar, the caterpillar too would resist its metamorphosis into a butterfly until the last moment.

No, I'm not becoming a butterfly. There is a certain inertia in every form. The form, you can see it in children or sometimes adults.

You're tired, but you don't want to go to bed because there's an inertia in the state of

being awake. You want to remain, you're not really awake anymore. And then when you're in bed, you don't want to get out of bed.

There's an inertia in that state. With children, you have it very often. There's an inertia in every form.

So the thought forms want to remain as those thought forms. So there is a, and that is the, they want, they will resist anything that would bring about a shift in consciousness. So there is something in you, and it's fine, that doesn't want to be free.

And that's a strange realization. There is something in me that does not want to be free. And that, you might think, is that a personal fault of mine?

No, there's nothing personal in that. That pretends to be a personal entity or personal matter. That in me wants to be taken seriously and be somebody, me.

But it is not a personal matter at all. It is a universal mind pattern. That principle of inertia is in you.

And it will find many reasons and excuses why you cannot be present now and why this moment is not important at all. Because I have far more important things to think about. It can give you many convincing arguments why it's not going to work for you.

You might as well forget it. It's all nonsense anyway. I mean, you've got all that nonsense about change in consciousness.

This is real, your problems are real. The falling shares are real. Your financial situation, that's real.

And so it'll come up, it'll tell you what is real, what matters. Because it doesn't want to go. And it comes up with things that you need to think about now.

At night especially. Very important. There's nothing you can do, you're lying there, but.

And so what conventionally is called worry, what it simply means, uncontrolled negative thought processes that are projecting themselves into future, if that's what worry is. I'm sure it's not the dictionary definition, but totally identified with mind movement, creating situations and problems that are not here now. What could happen, might happen, probably will happen.

And so at night those things can start up very strongly. And so the possibility of you noticing that so that the other dimension can come in is greater now, especially after having endured or enjoyed our retreat here. Even if you think, and you probably will think because the thinker doesn't know what's going on here, even if you think that nothing is happening here, sitting here is quite enough for something to shift inside you.

And the thinker, even if the thinker says, no, it's not happening, nothing is going on. So to recognize the mind, to recognize the momentum behind it and the inertia that is there, it doesn't want to stop worrying. The worrying entity, the thinker, do you think the thinker wants to stop thinking?

Or do you think the worrier wants to stop worrying? Its whole existence is worrying. Well, conventionally you all know this because we all know people who you ask, who would they be if they couldn't worry about something?

But that is a pattern more strongly developed in others, in some than in others, that is in everyone. So the thinker does not want the end of thinking. The worrier, which is the thinker intensified, doesn't want the end of worrying.

The worry has a momentum too. Particularly if the pattern of worry gets connected to the latent pain, emotional pain, that humans carry in here. And that's what the thinker likes to do.

The thinking entity, the self, to keep itself going, it links into the, what I sometimes call pain body, which is the accumulation of pain from the past that humans carry, the residue goes back a long way. It's collective to a large extent, collective human pain inherited through thousands of years of madness, hundreds of thousands of years of suffering inflicted by humans on themselves and on each other. And your personal life too.

Every child suffers coming into this world through the unconsciousness around them. And so you carry that inside, and the worrier and the thinker and the mind made self, when they don't, when it's to gain more momentum, will link into that energy field of emotion, the old emotion of pain. And that will energize those mind movements.

And that is what keeps the self entity going again and again very strongly. The old pain that gives energy to thought processes. And you think you're worrying about certain things in your life, but really you're acting out 100,000 years of human pain that are here.

Then the mind finds some kind of explanation. It's made into something personal, me. So to bring presence into that, we'll be addressing in more detail the pain body also, but just here to see that when it happens.

And once this movement has started, something is operating in you, an energy field, almost one could say a temporary entity that does not want an end to the pain. It does not want an end to the worry. It wants to carry on worrying.

You can find that out for yourself if at that moment somebody pointed out to you the possibility of stepping out of that, which is there. The possibility of recognizing that pattern and stepping out of it. If you're totally identified with a pattern, you will deny

that possibility because you are not speaking.

The pattern is speaking. The conditioned entity is speaking. And you will say, this is absolute nonsense.

Whatever arguments it comes up with, it will say there's no such thing as present moment. I'm not interested in, leave me alone with that nonsense of present moment. This is what matters.

And this is how it is. That's what's going to happen. So to compensate, one could almost say, for the enormous momentum of that, what we could call the movement of unconsciousness in humanity, which is not a personal problem, not anybody's personal problem, but that undeniably very still, very powerful movement of unconsciousness that is in humanity.

Even after this retreat, you may not be totally free of that. May. And so what is needed, and yes, it is happening, the arising of that which is beyond that needs to be more powerful than that.

Not that it is fighting anything. It's not fighting that. In its vastness, it contains that and then dissolves it.

But the arising of presence needs to be intense. Otherwise, you will be totally drawn in again and again into the old movement of unconsciousness. Now, can, the question is, can you make that happen?

Can you make the arising of the unconditioned presence, can you make it more intense, or is it something that just happens by itself? And the answer is not clear-cut. It is yes and no.

Can you make it happen? Yes and no. From one perspective, yes.

You can, as I sometimes call it, you can take up the sword of presence that says, only this is real. Only this moment is real. And what is the problem at this moment?

That cuts through the problem-making conditioned mind which needs past and future to continue to manufacture its problematic sense of self. To cut through, to access in yourself presence that cuts through all that and says, okay, stepping out of mind by choice into the aliveness and freedom of this moment. You can do that, one could say.

You can do what the Zen master described as the essence of Zen when he raised, he would only ever do one thing when he asked, what is the essence of Zen? This, intense presence. He never said that.

Alertness, presence, be here fully. And that is something you can do. You can choose presence.

Now nothing that I say or anybody says is totally true. And even that statement is not totally true. Reality is far deeper than could ever be contained in any one statement.

You can choose presence because presence is already arising in you and through you. And that can give you the feeling that yes, I can choose presence and that's good. I wouldn't say that to anybody because it would not be true for them.

If not enough presence is arising, you can't choose presence. So let's, why not, instead of trying to somehow resolve the paradox of the seemingly contradictory statements, why not allow the seemingly contradictory statements to be there because they point beyond themselves to a greater truth? The mind says, no, let's work this out, yes or no?

And it would even fight. If it has chosen the yes, it'll fight against the no. And that is a wonderful thing because, and we can do that now, this is an example of allowing mental positions to be there and allowing different mental positions to coexist also without believing that one position encapsulates the entire truth.

Now the mind will tell you, will you not, will I not become totally paralyzed because I won't know what to do anymore? If I do not subscribe to one way of looking at things, what was going to be the motivating factor? And the motivating factor will no longer be thought.

The intelligence of the unconditioned consciousness will motivate you, things will happen, it will move through you and action will happen when it's needed, but not through adopting and defending a mental position because defending my mental position, whatever it may be, implies you're fighting other mental positions. And an extreme manifestation of that is the terrorist, for example, or whatever else. It's totally being trapped in a conceptualized sense of us or self and totally making a conceptualized identity for others so that they are not alive anymore.

Other humans are mental concepts as such. It is totally fine to kill them because they are no more than, they are dead mental concepts. Whatever label you have put onto them, you have already killed them with your labels.

Whether or not you then kill them physically doesn't really, almost doesn't matter anymore. You've done it already, almost. So being trapped in conceptualization, the movement of unconsciousness is still in you, yes.

The choice is there now. For the choice to be there, you need to recognize that you have been trapped in mind, that you are trapped in mind. And a good sign is suffering in your life, any kind of suffering.

You've lost the now. Re-enter the now. One way is sense perceptions.

Sense to truly, in the way that we described, truly perceive with acute awareness.

Another one is allowing this moment to be as it is. It's a little exit too.

And a beautiful one is the inner body, feeling the aliveness in your inner energy field. That takes attention away from thinking. That's another exit out of the prison of mind.

That may be particularly helpful when the worry pattern starts. If that's the pattern, worry is a form of fear. At night, for example.

All that's needed is notice that it's happening to you. That requires already a minimum of awareness. If you don't have that, you have no choice.

Because you are totally the worrier. Worry, W-O, and the other one too. You're totally the worrier, and then you have no choice.

So the fact that there is choice means there's at least a minimum of awareness. Even in the midst of unconsciousness, being taken over by the momentum of the mind, there's still the minimum of awareness that knows that you're being taken over by the mind. And at that moment, choice becomes in.

But that is not up to you. It's by the grace of the divine that that minimum of awareness is there in you. And there, the choice is there.

And again, it's only a perspective to step out. And the worrier will tell you, no, I can't, no point. That's another thought.

Should you totally believe in that thought? No, there's a thought that says you can't possibly get out of it, and you really need to think about this. And then you do it anyway.

It is very, that mind is very clever with arguments and trying to convince you why not. And then you do it anyway. You can't possibly, you can't feel the inner body now.

What's the point in even trying to feel the inner body with what's going on in here? There's no point in even trying. And then you do it anyway.

And then you sense there's an aliveness in your hands and your feet. And the rest of the body. Who says you can't feel your body?

That was just a thought. And then attention moves there. And it is quite possible, within a minute or two, you can shift from a boring entity to feeling intensely alive and present in your entire energy field.

And that means the inner body becomes an anchor for staying present. It's your anchor. And then you will notice the pull of the mind of wanting your attention back.

And it'll then come up with some other thought. Just before you go in, just think about this. And then it pulls your attention half out again.

And for a moment, you're back in that. And then you notice it again and you're back in the body. And then you have to walk on the razor's edge of now for the rest of lying awake that night.

Because if you leave the now, you suffer. And another thought comes. You leave the now.

And then you're back. That is beautiful practice. Most of you probably drive cars.

Another wonderful field of practice to drive your car in presence. You're less likely to have an accident also. Mostly when you drive your car, you're thinking about something else.

It's on automatic. You're not thinking about the driving, and nor should you be, because you wouldn't be driving very well if you were thinking about. So it's automatic.

Something else is driving. But why not just be still while you drive and perceive everything? Very aware of the movement.

Very alert. It's amazing how many people personalize the act of driving. So it's regarded as normal.

They personalize going from A to B behind the wheel of a car. It becomes a personal struggle. With other drivers, they get angry.

They shout. It's simply the movement of traffic. No different from the weather or any other movement, life movement.

But they personalize it because the me strengthened itself through having, where's my enemy? The enemy is right there. I always say, beware of driving pain bodies.

What does a driving pain body want without knowing it? The driving pain body wants something to go wrong. To have more pain.

And sooner or later it will. All that he or she needs is another driving pain body in the vicinity. So our practice here for nature, your own room, walking from A to B, not making that movement into a means to an end, needing to get there.

Just be there at every step. The next step is not going to be more important than this one. The arriving is not going to be more important than this moment.

Be there within every step. Walk along around the campus here as a field of aware, alert, alive presence without carrying the burden of your story and think about it as you walk. Or I say, I wonder what's going on in the world.

What's in the news? Not good. It wasn't good last week.

It's not good this week. And when you get home and you listen to the news again, it'll still be the same. The news are very selective.

The collective mind says this is important and this is important and this is important. That's the news. It overlooks a lot.

There's a wonderful person living here on campus, a great artist. He arranges all these flower arrangements that we see in different places with leaves and most incredible awareness has gone into that. I believe his name is Jonathan, if I remember rightly from last year.

Just the most amazing example of beauty that is created whenever something is being performed in the state of presence and the love that flows into the doing naturally, any doing that arises out of presence. And he can take any objects, a few dead leaves or dying leaves, a little bit of moss and a little bit of that and puts it together and it's a creation of great beauty. That is also very helpful to look upon anything that was created out of that state of consciousness, can reflect that state back to you, can give you a reflection of that state that's the essence of art probably, to give you a reflection of the state out of which it came, which shines through the form.

Every great work of art is more than what you see. It can't really define it through concepts. It's always more and something shines through that is not the form and that is the state of consciousness out of which it came.

And when you look upon it rightly, which means in the state of aware presence, it can strengthen and deepen that state in you. That is the beauty of art. And probably even relatively unconscious human beings, deep down, they can sense something when they look at a work of art and they may treasure it.

It's very deep, they feel something. They somehow, they don't always recognize it. There's probably been great art that's never been recognized.

And in the case of some great artists, they were never recognized in their lifetime. I don't know who, perhaps it was Van Gogh, who never sold a single painting in his lifetime. Nobody wanted to, not interested.

Nobody was really looking. So something shines through. So, and even anything made, a craftsman makes, can also happen, doesn't have to be a great painting.

Anything that a craftsman has spent a long time being present with, not a means to an end, giving attention, the flow of attention, which is awareness, which is presence, goes into that and then the object embodies that. It embodies quality in its deepest sense. And it's always, there's always an aspect of sacredness to that, always.

But whether or not you make something, only a few of you will be making something

with your hands or in whatever way, it doesn't, presence manifests in so many different ways. It can also manifest entirely outside the world of form with just you sitting there, listening to someone, not even saying anything, just being there as spacious presence. One more thing here, little movements, perform little movements and be present with that.

Just little, whatever you might be doing naturally when you put on your shoes or your feet move into your sandals, or you tie your shoelaces. Usually you would be thinking about the next thing, but why not just be there? And there's a stillness around the action in which the action happens.

Walking down a few steps or wherever it may be, chup, chup, chup, chup, chup, chup, chup, chup, chup, chup, or any habitual action. Don't make it too long at first. You might get lost in thought.

If you say, I'm going to perform making this cup of tea in presence, it might be too much because you have to fill the kettle, you have to wait for it to boil, and by then you might be off somewhere. Why not just while you stir the cup of tea, chup, chup, chup, something that would be totally unnoticed, not noticeable to you in the normal state of consciousness, just small actions, little bit of honey in the tea if you take honey, chup. And there was a space of no thought, just that.

Anything that's short that you do often. Lighting a, no, you don't have candles here, you're not supposed to have candles. Pouring a liquid, water or juice, little spaces in your life, and then more and more spaces, and then some spaces come naturally by themselves.

And sooner or later you might find a big space. It's just a matter of time. It all implies getting out of living in that conceptualized me in the head.